



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2009

No. 7

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord God Almighty, You have made all the people of the Earth for Your glory, to serve You in freedom and peace. Today, as our lawmakers seek to serve, give them a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that they may accomplish Your purposes. Let them feel the constancy of Your presence, as You guide them with a higher wisdom. May each success prompt them to greater undertakings for human betterment. Lord, renew their commitment to pray not only for those with whom they agree but also for those with whom they disagree. Bring our Senators to the end of this day with their hearts at peace with You.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 13, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, there will be a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each. The majority will control the first 30 minutes, and the Republicans will control the final 30 minutes. Following morning business, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 22, the wilderness bill. Yesterday, I filed cloture on the bill. The cloture vote is expected to occur an hour after the Senate convenes tomorrow. We will be in recess today from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. for our weekly caucus luncheons. The filing deadline for first-degree amendments is at 2:30 p.m. today.

Mr. President, I have had a discussion with Senator BINGAMAN this morning. He is going to see if there is something that can be worked out to have a limited number of amendments on the wilderness bill. He will proceed to work on that. If, in fact, he can work something out with those interested on the other side, then we will have a number of votes on that. If they cannot work that out, then, as has been indicated in the past, we will go to cloture tomorrow. If we can work something out there, we can have those votes today and final passage of the bill this afternoon.

We are going to move to the Ledbetter issue dealing with pay eq-

uity, the statute of limitations—call it whatever we wish. That is something we will move to this week. The Troubled Asset Relief Program, TARP, is now here with us, and there is a very strict deadline when we must finish that. We must have a vote on that by this Sunday. So we have our work cut out for us. We have a lot to do.

These are very exciting times, as we know, for our country. We have a new Congress. We have a new President. Senator MCCONNELL and I have done our utmost during these past many weeks to try to work together to get some things done here. We are now at a point where we have resolved, we believe, the issue relating to how committees are funded and what the ratios are going to be on the various committees, and it is easy for me to say that or Senator MCCONNELL to say that, but it has taken weeks of work to get that done. But we are moving forward. We hope the work of this next week will be in keeping with how we intend to maintain a degree of bipartisanship in the Senate during this Congress. We hope that, in fact, is the case. We will do our utmost to comply with that.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

WORK OF THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, a couple brief observations with reference to what the Democratic leader just indicated. I want to say I appreciate the way in which we are going forward here. When he and I first came to the Senate, the notion that you would pass bills without amendment was foreign to everyone. I think we are getting off to a good start here with a kind of reestablishment of the Senate as it used to operate with amendments

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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S319